

# African Excursion

## Local educator takes her skills to South Africa to train teachers

BY FELECIA P. MCMILLAN  
COMMUNITY CORRESPONDENT

Alease Rae Motley Jones of Burlington was one of six teachers selected to share their knowledge and expertise with colleagues in rural South Africa through a unique partnership between two N.C. companies: The South Africa Booksmart Foundation of High Point and Triangle Pharmaceuticals Inc. of Durham. Jones and the five other teachers were selected because of their specialized training and experience in the areas of library science, early childhood development and elementary education. Jones is a kindergarten teacher in Caswell County Schools.

The group left on Saturday, June 30, from Raleigh and returned on July 18 from the three-week trip. They trained more than 225 South African teachers with 480 hours of instruction. The trip was a follow-up to a book launch that took place in 2000. The teachers went to show the South African educators how to use the textbooks and resource materials to fight illiteracy in the rural townships of South Africa.

"It was a very rewarding experience. It was also an eye-opener that makes me appreciate what is available in America," Jones said. "I take so many things for granted. I was greatly concerned with the lack of basic materials such as chalk, crayons, even dictionaries or paper. The South African teachers had open arms for anything we could give away."

Jones was also amazed with the professionalism and creativity of the African instructors.

"I was very impressed with the high level of training and understanding the South African teachers have, and I was glad that they wanted to stay in contact with the American teachers," Jones said. "At the end of each session they sang songs of praise, danced and hugged us because they were so grateful. It was very



Alease Jones, far right, poses with other educators during their recent trip to South Africa. Jones is a teacher in Caswell County.

moving. All of the American teachers were moved to tears."

Robert Brown, the founder of South Africa Booksmart Foundation, which is based in High Point, sees literacy as a way to fight many of the ills in South Africa.

"Reading is vital to the economic foundation of a country and our efforts to promote literacy through programs such as the teacher training workshops help to aid that process," Brown said.

The training program was made possible through a grant from Triangle Pharmaceuticals Inc.

"This was my first trip to Africa. I was so impressed with the vastness of the land," Jones said. "I have seen South Africa in National Geographic magazine or on television programs, but I saw beaches like I have never seen before. It was so beautiful. The sand was white and the water was a clear blue-green."

Although Jones was impressed with the lay of the terrain, she was greatly distressed to find that the schools in the rural townships of South Africa had no educational resources or provisions for elementary school students. As an educator, Jones considers the formative years "a critical time for acquiring knowledge." For this reason she was pleased to offer her expertise to

the teachers in order to aid the children.

Carl Mentz, a white native of South Africa and also director of information systems and research for B&C Associates, went on the trip as a guide.

"This is an amazing project because it provides opportunities to students who would not have education without it. A lot of the children in these areas are not able to have resources. They are sharing books," Mentz said. "Because the local government has many needs, they cannot provide 100 percent for all of them. Unfortunately, education is usually neglected. Can you imagine having a science test and not even having a science book to study?"

Jones and her colleagues would awaken at 7:30 each morning and prepare their materials after breakfast. At each site, they would call roll and present for about 60 attendants during each session. Jones focused on pre-primary or early childhood development.

July 2-3, they trained teachers in Durban from two cities in the province of Kwa-zulu Natal: Port Shepstone and Pietermaritzburg. They stayed in a local city lodge or hotel. The training sessions were administered from 8 a.m. until 4 p.m. During the sessions, they allowed the teachers breaks for lunch and tea, Jones said.

The teachers were insistent that the teaching continue because they wanted to get all of the information they could gain.

July 5-6 found Jones and her colleagues in Nongoma, an exceptionally rural area of Natal. Jones was fascinated to meet King Goodwill Zwelithini, king of the Zulus. He is a direct descendant of Shaka Zulu, and he has at least four queens. He provided shelter for the educators while they were in the area.

July 9-10, Jones and the others taught in the Eastern Cape Province in the city of Umtata. There, they trained teachers from East London and Port Elizabeth who attended. In addition, several Education Department personnel from Eastern Cape participated.

July 12-13, they went to Cape Town to train educators, and the mayor of Cape Town attended the sessions, July 16-17. Jones and her fellow educators trained teachers in Johannesburg. On July 18, the teachers flew back to the States.

The South Africa Booksmart Foundation began in 1993 with the shipment of books and other resource materials donated from the Guilford County public schools. Since then, the foundation has transported more than 2 million books to South Africa to establish more than 100 satellite libraries.

# Edelman, McCain to speak at WFU

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

Former presidential hopeful John McCain, a U.S. senator from Arizona and decorated Navy veteran, is scheduled to deliver Wake Forest University's commencement address on May 20, and Marian Wright Edelman, founder and president of the Children's Defense Fund, is scheduled to deliver the baccalaureate address during commencement weekend.

Edelman is a graduate of Spelman College and Yale Law School. She was the first black

woman admitted to the Mississippi Bar. She directed the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund office in Jackson until 1968, when she became counsel for the



Edelman

See Wake Forest on A5

# PTA is planning health fair Feb. 12

FROM STAFF REPORTS

The Ashley Elementary School Wellness Center in conjunction with the school's PTA will sponsor a community health fair at Ashley on Feb. 12, beginning at 6:30 p.m.

The Wellness Center at Ashley is a collaborative effort of Wake Forest Baptist Medical Center, Forsyth Medical Center/Novant Health and Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools.

A variety of agencies will be on hand to discuss the services they offer to the community.

Mandy Scales, the center's registered nurse, said the health fair is being held to acquaint community residents with the services and agencies in their community.

"We're having this to promote the awareness of health issues and to give the community access to everything that is available to them," she said.

Representatives will be on hand to discuss Medicaid and Health Choice Enrollment. Scales said a lot of people are not familiar with Health Choice Enrollment, which is a medical program for people who can't qualify for Medicaid services but don't have medical insurance.

There will be discussion of many relevant issues that relate

to health, including information on nutrition and healthy snacks. Representatives from the Health Department will provide information on parenting, teen talk, puberty/family planning, dental health and healthy kids. Woman-Wise, program for women's health issues will provide blood pressure screening. A representative from Today's Woman will provide much adult wellness information. Enrollment packets will be available for the Downtown Health Plaza.

Karen Patterson, the center's social worker, said the health fair also will provide information on mental health issues.

"There's going to be a lot of information on how to get services for everyday mental health needs," Patterson said. "We can point people toward support groups, provide parenting tips and general information about where to go to obtain whatever services they might want or need."

Information on substance abuse, depression, stress and methods of coping will be available.

"There is such stereotype about mental health," Patterson said. "But that is an area we all have to deal with every day in dealing with the stress we face from day to day."

## SSAH

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corp before launching Blaylock & Partners in 1993. In his 20-year career on Wall Street, Blaylock has worked with a diverse range of corporate clients and institutional investors. As the primary strategist at Blaylock & Partners, Blaylock's leadership has resulted in a number of unique industry achievements. For example, B&P was listed as the Corporate Capital Raiser of the Year by Corporate Finance Magazine in 1999. Black Enterprise Magazine listed the firm as top women/minority investment bank. In addition, the firm ranked among the top 20 investment banking firms in the United States for underwriting investment grade debt for 1999.

Blaylock graduated from East Forsyth High School and went on to Georgetown University, where he earned a B.S. degree and was a member of the school's first NCAA Final Four basketball team. He serves on the board of visitors at Georgetown University and the New York University Stern School of Business. In addition, he serves on the board of the American General Life Insurance Company of New York. His other charitable board work includes the

American Ballet Theatre, the Inner-City Scholarship Fund, Prep for Prep and the Covenant House, which presented him with the 1997 Man of the Year Award.

The theme of the SSAH's banquet is "We've Come This Far..." and Blaylock will speak on that topic from his perspective as an investment banker.

Billy Rich, president of SSAH, will preside at the banquet. Phyllis A. Davis, co-chair of the banquet, will give the welcome. Rev. Henry S. Lewis Jr., pastor of Wentz Memorial United Church of Christ and immediate past president of SSAH and board of directors, will give the Invocation. Attorney Harold L. Kennedy Jr., of the SSAH board of directors, will give historical reflections. Then a full dinner will be served. Raphael O. Black of the SSAH board of directors will provide music. Attorney Kenneth W. Lewis, of Buford & Lewis, PLLC, in Raleigh, will introduce the speaker. After Blaylock's speech, Mayor Pro Tempore and Alderman Vivian H. Burke will make a presentation from the city.

THE SSAH Banquet Committee will be recognized. Dr. Lenwood G. Davis, Dr. William J. Rice and Dr. James H. McLaughlin - SSAH authors of "African Americans in Winston-

Salem/Forsyth County, A Pictorial History," which was published in 1999 - will be recognized, and copies of the book will be for sale.

Other items on the program for the banquet are: recognition of the Urban Planning Class, WSSU; announcements by Joan Cardwell, co-chair of the SSAH banquet and chair of the Forsyth County Board of Elections; recognition of elected officials and candidates; singing of "Lift Every Voice and Sing"; remarks by Dr. Harold L. Martin Sr., chancellor of WSSU; and Benediction by Rev. Henry S. Lewis Jr.

Phyllis Davis said of the banquet: "It's a fund-raiser. We are trying to build capital to enhance the opportunity to preserve the history of Afro-Americans in Winston-Salem and Forsyth County."

Joan Cardwell said the banquet is held annually during Black History Month. "We had (N.C.) Chief Justice Henry Frye (as speaker) one year. We've had some other state legislators (as speakers)."

Tickets for the event are \$25 per person. Tables of eight are available. All members of SSAH are selling tickets to the event. For more information, call Billy Rich at (336) 650-1459 or William Rice at 767-6496.

# Love letters,

birthday cards, holiday cards, invitations, good news from home, a note of congratulations, what would a mailbox be without them?

The United States Postal Service is doing everything we can to make the mail safe for us all. As we know, life must go on, including the celebration of Black History Month.

This year is the Black Heritage Series' 25th year wherein outstanding African Americans in various fields are honored with a commemorative stamp.



In February 2002, we proudly honor the prolific writer and one of the leading figures of the Harlem Renaissance, Langston Hughes. He wrote against all the odds and succeeded, never letting anyone or anything stop him from writing a poem, a song, a story or a letter.

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